Casado de Arcegeda de Rosales (Isidoro) Marqués de Monteleon 32

K

London, October 4, 1718. N S.

Copy of a Letter from the Marquis of Monteleone, *Ambaſſador from the King of* Spain, *to the Right Hononrable Mr. Secretary* Craggs.

SIR,

THO' I might be diſpenſed with, in not returning an Anſwer to your Letter of the 4th of *Sept.* becauſe it treats of many Particulars, of which I preſume neither You nor I are yet fully appriſed; and becauſe it refers to ſome Matters, to which it is neceſſary I ſhould receive more exact Inſtructions, before I can take upon me to anſwer them in the Name of the King my Maſter:

Yet, Sir, being impatient to remove any Reflections which may be entertained to the Injury of his Majeſty's Honour, deſirous to cultivate a good Correſpondence between the two Nations, and conceiving that the removing of Miſtakes is the likelieſt Method to obtain that End; without attending farther Inſtructions and fuller Informations, I take the Liberty to object to the moſt material Paſſages in your Letter, and refer it intirely to your Prudence (which I have in the greateſt Eſteem) either to ſuppreſs this Letter, or, in compliance with modern Cuſtom, by publiſhing it with your own, to refer them to the Judgment and Caprice of the Publick.

You think fit, Sir, to declare, That the *Spaniards began the Hoſtilities*, and you term that to be only a *Circumſtance*, which I believe the whole World will eſteem a Point of the utmoſt Conſequence: For upon this Fact alone, the Notion of Peace and War, according to the Law of Nations, and the Opinion of all the Civilians I have read, ought to be determin'd. But I muſt applaud your Sincerity in not inſiſting on this Aſſertion; for in the very next Line, you ſay, *This Action might be very well expected*, and *ought by no means to appear ſurpriſing to his Catholick Majeſty*; or, *had I been inform'd of Particulars as well as you, I muſt have expected, and could not have been ſurpriſed at what has happened.* So that while you endeavour to aſſure me, That the *Spaniſh* Fleet began the Hoſtilities, your convince me with very ſolid Proofs, that the *Engliſh* were the Agreſſors, and that this Treatment was what we ought to expect from them.

I take the Liberty to aſſure you, Sir, that had the King my Maſter had the leaſt apprehenſion of ſuch an injurious Proceeding, he could eaſily have collected ſuch a Number of Ships, as would (God giving a Bleſſing to the Juſtneſs of his Cauſe) have prevented the Misfortune which has happened to the Reſt.

But his Majeſty had entertain'd other Thoughts, and his Miniſters had other Expectations, and thoſe were grounded not upon ſiniſter Views, nor upon partial Bargains and dark Engagements; but upon the ſolemn, publick, and general Peace of *Utrecht*; of which I will only repeat to you Part of an Article

And whereas the Catholick King, at the Requeſt of Her Royal Britannick *Majeſty, has been pleas'd to yield the Kingdom of* Sicily *to His Royal Highneſs* Victor Amadeus *Duke of* Savoy, *and by the Treaty this Day entred into between His Royal Catholick Majeſty, and His Royal Highneſs of* Savoy, *does make a Ceſſion of the ſaid Kingdom, Her Royal Majeſty of* Great Britain *aforeſaid, promiſes and engages that She will take great Care, that in Default of the Heirs-Male of the Houſe of* Savoy, *the Poſſeſſion of the aforeſaid Kingdom of* Sicily *ſhall revert again to the Crown of* Spain; *and Her aboveſaid Royal* Britannick *Majeſty, doth farther conſent, that the Kingdom of* Sicily *may not, under any Pretence, or in any Manner whatever, be alienated or given to any Prince or State, unleſs to the Catholick King of* Spain, *and to his Heirs and Succeſſors.*

Now, if it ſhall be made apparent that the Duke of *Savoy* had entred into private Engagements to transfer the Kingdom of *Sicily* to the Arch-Duke, and (which will make the late Action in the *Mediterranean* appear yet more unjuſtifiable) that the Knowledge of this proceeded from *Great Britain* and *France*, and that they and none elſe whatſoever, had, of themſelves, induced His Catholick Majeſty to retake that Kingdom, as his Eminence the Cardinal *Alberoni* has already declared to my Lord *Stanhop*; I dare be confident the whole World will then be of Opinion, That the *Britiſh* Fleet, in conformity to the aforeſaid Treaty, ought rather to have aſſiſted the King my Maſter, than to have annoy'd him in Favour of the Arch-Duke, or the Duke of *Savoy*.

Reaſon and Equity would certainly have required this; for no Man who pretends to either, will affirm, that the King of *Spain* is oblig'd to conform to any Articles, which have been privately ſtipulated by any other Powers repugnant to his Intereſt, injurious to his Honour, and without his Conſent or even Knowledge.

Give me Leave to ſuppoſe, Sir, That Five Men had conſented to the Diviſion of an Eſtate, and had ratified and publiſhed their Agreement in the moſt ſolemn and

authentick

authentick Manner, if afterwards any Two or Three, nay if Four of the Five should privately make a new Bargain, and resolve on a new Partition, sure no one would maintain, That the Fifth is obliged to acquiesce.

To alleviate the Rigor of this unexampled Proceeding, you are pleased, Sir, to instance several Particulars, some of which are easily disproved. and others can be accounted for; but allowing them to be real, are there not other Methods to be taken for adjusting Differences, besides sudden Hostilities? Has not each King a Minister residing at the other's Court, on Purpose to obviate Mistakes and compose all Misunderstandings? May Princes in the strictest Amity, and cemented by the Ties of mutual Interest and Obligations without any previous Demand of Satisfaction, without the least Shew of Displeasure, and without any Declaration of War, may they, upon the Notion of imaginary Grievances, Invade each other? I am confident, Sir, you will agree with me, That such a Proceeding would be looked on to be as unjust, as it would be rash and unprecedented.

Now is it a Reflexion unworthy your most serious Thoughts; if His Catholick Majesty will look on himself to be longer obliged to have any Regard to the Renunciation of his Pretensions in *France*, since the Terms and Conditions for which he made that Renunciation have been so notoriously violated.

You do me the Honour to inform me, That His *Britannick* Majesty commands you *to touch but very lightly on other Complaints of an inferior Nature*; and I must take the Freedom to say. That in my poor Opinion, they might as properly have been wholly omitted, since after giving your self the Trouble of enumerating them, you declare, *That His Majesty gives no Credit to them.* But had those Menaces and Insinuations obtained Credit, yet when it is found that they are subsequent to the *British* Fleet's having attacked the *Spanish*, *they might be expected, and no one can be surprised at them.*

However, I own my self *surprised* at the great Resentment you express against his Eminence Cardinal *Alberoni's* Letter to Monsieur the Marquis *Beretti Landi*: The Objection you are pleas'd to make to it, is, That *it tends to insense the Subjects of* Great Britain *against the Government of their Sovereign.* And pray, Sir, have not you endeavoured the same Thing in your *Letter?* You declare, *That the King your Master never had any Intention to represent to the Subjects of His Catholick Majesty the Loss of many of their ancient Privileges*, &c. but is not this doing it, when a Person of your Experience, and One of his Secretaries of State, print and publish it both at Home and Abroad? But, Sir, as I sincerely wish that nothing may be able to discompose the Affairs of His *Britannick* Majesty, so I dare assure you, That these Insinuations will have no Effect on the ancient Fidelity of the *Spanish* Nation. Whatever Disturbances may have been some Years past in *Spain*, they are now entirely extinguished by the Wisdom and Goodness of the King my Master. And I cannot but congratulate you also, That His *Britannick* Majesty is so universally beloved and admired by his People, that there is such an Harmony and Union between all his Subjects, that Faction and Discontent are so wholly extirpated, and that the State of your Commerce and of your National Credit, is in so flourishing a Condition, that you can securely divert your Self with and triumph over the Poverty and Disunion of other Nations.

But unhappily these Expostulations come a little too late; had you been pleas'd to have communicated the Grievances complain'd of, before that surprising Insult on the *Spanish* Fleet, I should with all Readiness have laid them before the King my Master, from whose Justice all reasonable Satisfaction is to be expected; I can now only express my Concern that I can no longer be an Instrument of Accommodation. And for those Inconveniences which naturally attend a War, I take the Liberty to reply to you in your own Words, *That* His Catholick Majesty *will endeavour to repair them by such Methods as may probably prove as dangerous to the Trade and Interest* of Great Britain *as to those* of *Spain.*

The Resolution His *Britannick* Majesty has taken *to maintain the Dignity of his Crown, the Trade and Privileges of his People, and the Faith of his Treaties*, is truly becoming a Prince; and let it be refer'd to the whole World how exactly it is pursu'd. The People of *Great Britain* may be soon sensible how advantageous it is to them to invade a Nation, by whom they were held in the highest Esteem, and with whom they enjoyed so beneficial a Trade; and this done perhaps for the Support of some Territories which are prejudicial to the true Interest of *Great Britain*, and for the aggrandizing a Prince, already too powerful, and with whom they have little or no Commerce.

This will be look'd on by all Mankind, and by all Posterity, to be just as sure a Method to preserve Trade and encrease Riches, as it is an exact Observation of Treaties, unprovok'd, unnecessarily and suddenly to Attack and Invade a Prince, whom by the most solemn and publick Treaties, you are engaged to Aid and Support; and by so doing to break that Ballance of Power in *Europe*, which it has always been the Prudence, Honour, and Interest of the *Britannick* Nation to sustain.

I am, with the greatest Respect and Esteem, Sir, *&c.*